

includes their larvae — and kills mosquitoes, cockroaches and houseflies; that the market for a cedarwood insecticide could be immense; and that the soap industry extracts the oil in bulk from wood-chips of the Indian cedar. (For details see *Naturwissenschaften* 71: 264). The latter fact very likely accounts for my favourite experience with scented soap in this connection (*antea* 185.) All this seems to offer great promise for a solution of the problem to which I called attention, even if not a complete answer.— A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

### **A safe and practical pest-repellent for insect collections**

Smugness is always irritating (in others), and it is with some consciousness of this that I write in response to Mr A.A. Allen's note about protecting collections against insect and mite attack (*antea* pp.184-5). The truth is that I have never been troubled by *Anthrenus* and the like since adopting a method of protection which I first encountered in the Entomology Section of East Malling Research Station some 30 years ago. I have always been puzzled as to why the method is not better known.

It is, in brief, to paint the internal edges of storeboxes or cabinet drawers with a 4% solution of DDT (or Dieldrin: Aldrin and other organochlorines would probably also answer) in an organic solvent such as acetone. These days DDT and other organochlorines are difficult to obtain and this is probably the most pertinent objection to their use.

To those environmentalists who shudder at the mere mention of DDT, I point out the following facts:

- (1) The mammalian toxicity of DDT is low.
- (2) The small amounts impregnating storeboxes and cabinet drawers are not volatile and pose negligible risks to the entomologist's health.
- (3) There is little or no risk of the DDT being translocated into the environment.
- (4) The protection given is virtually absolute and very long lasting. I have not yet had to re-treat any of my storeboxes.
- (5) The application is simple and not dependent on the frequent filling of awkward cells or vials.

I do not have a supplier of DDT and do not know what I shall do when my current supply of solution in acetone runs out.

And I have no answer to the problem of *mould* (though central heating helps).— Dr M.G. MORRIS, Orchard House, 7 Clarence Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2HF.

### **Early occurrence of Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta* (L.) in Cardiganshire in 1990**

There is strong evidence for the survival of a Red Admiral butterfly, *Vanessa atalanta* (L.) over the winter 1989-1990 following the appearance of a specimen on 23rd February 1990 in Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire,

together with a Small Tortoiseshell, *Aglais urticae* (L.). It is stated that *A. urticae* appears on the first warm, sunny day *after* the end of February (the italics are mine), (Emmet, 1989 *The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* Vol. 7, Pt.1). A warm front during the third week of April resulted in the highest recorded temperature on this day this century in the United Kingdom, 1959 and 1961 excepted, reaching 19°C (66°F) in some places with Cardiganshire 18°C (64°F), but it seems not to have been associated at this time with an influx of migrant insects into Britain. It was on 17th March that *A. urticae*, and 28th March, *V. atalanta*, were seen again — a lapse of thirty-four days.

The sighting of *V. atalanta*, a migrant not usually resident, suggests it had overwintered. However, it may not have survived the subsequent -1°C (30°F) frost and snow of 2nd March, and frost of 11th March, 3°C (37°F). At the end of April a migration into the United Kingdom possibly took place when *Plusia gamma* (L.) was seen on 22nd with *V. atalanta* on 24th and 30th in the company of a Hummingbird Hawkmoth, *Macroglossum stellatarum* (L.) feeding at red dwarf Azalea flowers in my garden at Cnwch Coch, while I was in the company of Adrian Amsden.

The earliest evidence so far recorded of migration of *V. atalanta* into West Wales was from 2nd March 1952, only a week later than the sighting now reported with over seventy observations on record (Miles 1952, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **88**: 181).— PHILIP M. MILES, Werndeg, Cnwch Coch, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, Wales.

### **Possible overwintering in Britain of *Autographa gamma* Linn. (Lep.: Noctuidae), the Silver Y.**

On 15.ii.1990 a final instar larva of *A. gamma* was found on annual nettle (*Urtica urens*) near Stanford, Bedfordshire (TL 163 402). The larva was brought into the laboratory where it subsequently pupated. An adult male moth emerged three weeks later.

Single adults in perfect condition were caught in three Rothamsted Insect Survey light traps operating as part of an ecology project on the Rothamsted Farm, Hertfordshire (TL 120 137) on 3, 4 and 9.v.1990. No other known migratory species was caught at this time which, along with their condition, suggests that these individuals resulted from locally bred stock.

Heath and Emmet (*The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, **10**: 342-343. Harley, Colchester, 1983) state that, although there are a few proven cases of winter survival by moths, the early stages of *A. gamma* cannot develop at low temperatures and frost is fatal. However, the discovery of a fully-grown larva at this time of year, and the subsequent capture some 30 km distant of adult moths, provides strong evidence that this species was able to survive the very mild winter conditions of 1989/90. Further evidence of this species' ability to survive our winter climate is